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often concealed behind perfect forms. It is the purifying, the ennobling, the ethical influence of woman upon man and literature, which Scherer justly assigns to all the great periods of German literature.

The name of Prof. Max Müller vouches for the smooth and excellent translation of Mrs. Conybeare.

As the German language and literature are destined to be studied more from year to year, an attractive and trustworthy guide like this will prove of the greatest value. No real student of German literature should be without Prof. Scherer's master-work.

JULIUS GOEBEL.

Syntaktische Eigentümlichkeiten der Umgangssprache weniger gebildeter Pariser beobachtet in den Scènes populaires von Henri Monnier. Inaugural Dissertation von JULIUS SIEDE, Berlin. Mayer & Müller, 1885. 8vo, 66pp.

The citizen of the United States enjoys exceptionally good advantages for linguistic communication with his compatriots; for whether he go north, south, east or west, he finds about the same language spoken. Some little local coloring will be observable, which will take the form of peculiarity of intonation, broadening of vowel-sounds, drawl in pronunciation, and here and there words peculiar in themselves or peculiar in their special local use. We can not be said to have clearly defined dialects of American English; nor is it probable that we shall ever have, as our railroads, telegraphs, newspapers, above all our common school system, which carries the same vernacular into every household of the land, produce and keep up such a homogeneity of thoughts and interests in the whole mass of our population that the isolation necessary for dialectic growth will never exist. But there is a monster, which is looming up on the body linguistic and against which we need to be on our guard, namely, *slang*. Its proportions, at present, are comparatively small, but it is gradually creeping into our newspapers, books and periodicals, into the theatres, courts of justice, drawing-rooms, colleges, nay, even into our pulpits, and if we do not draw the lines a little more rigidly, we shall have to exclaim, as did Dumas, a few

years ago, under like circumstances, of the French language, *la langue anglaise est bien malade*.

"La langue française est bien malade" are not the mere words of a disgusted priest; they are literally and deplorably true. One who has been brought up, so to speak, on the language of the classic authors of the last and the preceding centuries, will often find himself sorely puzzled in the French capital of the present day, whether he be in the restaurants and cafés of the *Quartier Latin*, at the *Comédie française*, or in the best society. The "langue verte" is spoken everywhere and by almost every body. An enterprising restaurateur, some time ago, created no little sensation, and doubtless a considerable increase of trade, by displaying a placard containing, not *aquí se habla español*, or *English spoken here*, but *ici-caille on jaspine bigorne*. Sardou calls this monster the language of the future, and Francisque Michel, in his "Etudes de philologie comparée sur l'argot et les idiomes analogues," declares, he has no doubt but that it will eventually wholly usurp the place of the now fast becoming obsolete French proper. While this is surely going much too far, we must confess the statement is not without a strong basis of justification, when we find the most influential newspapers and the works of many of the best authors, not to mention Zola and his great train of naturalist followers, interlarded with argot.

The introduction of argot into literary works is doubtless traceable in no small degree to the influence of such writers as Balzac and Eugène Sue; for while their illiterate characters do not as a rule *dévident le jars*, still they speak a language not by any means classic, but in keeping with their social position. The Romanticists, with their exaggerations and license, tended strongly to bring classic form and elegance into disrepute; and it was but natural that the comic writers should go a step farther and admit into their plays, from the popular jargon, words and phrases that were capable of producing such striking effects. Whether these conjectures (for I give them only as such) be true or not, it is certain that by the middle of the present century slang had made such inroads into theatrical literature, that a vigorous outcry was raised against it, and Napoleon's secretary of state (Achille Fould), who had under his sur-

veillance the theatre, felt called upon to interfere and the result was the issuance of his famous decree, forbidding the representation of pieces infected with argot. The current, however, was too strong to be turned even by ministerial edicts and nothing came from the order.

Argot was originally the language of thieves and certain guilds, who desired to communicate with each other without being understood by the uninitiated, and arose in the natural way followed by all language growth. Did we wish to study it in its beginnings, we should find that like processes here as elsewhere had operated in the production of like results, but of course no such investigation can be entered into here. Beginning in the lowest strata of Parisian society, among the *chevaliers d'industrie* and the *voyoucrates*, it spread to the *demi-monde*; thence to the green-rooms of the theatres was an easy step, as at Paris, probably more there than anywhere else, actress is only to often synonymous with *fille de joie*. Access to the stage furnished the best possible credentials for introduction to the *grand monde* and the higher forms of literature, and thus the *voyoucrate* has become an *aristocrate* by a natural process of evolution.

The great prominence attained by the *langue verte* has naturally called forth many treatises on the subject, and for the benefit of those who may wish to inform themselves more definitely in regard to this in many ways unique language phenomenon, I here set down some of the most important: Ch. Nisard, *De quelques parisianismes populaires* (Paris 1876); Alfred Delvau, *Dictionnaire de la langue verte*; Lorédan Larchey, *Dictionnaire historique d'argot* (Paris 1881); Lucien Rigaud, *Dictionnaire d'Argot moderne*; Césaire Villatte, *Parisismen* (Berlin, 1884, Langenscheidt). The novels of Emile Zola, especially the earlier ones (*L'Assommoir*, *Nana*, *Pot-Bouille*, etc.) will furnish ample specimens of argot *en action*. They can be easily read by the aid of Villatte's excellent little book above mentioned.

Siede's dissertation forms, in some respects, a valuable addition to the philological literature of the popular speech of Paris and its environs. In 1846, Henri Monnier published a work entitled: *Scènes populaires dessinées à la plume*, a second edition of which, but slightly altered, appeared in 1879 (Paris, E. Dentu).

These volumes furnish Siede the material for his treatise. This circumstance implies that his work can lay no claims to completeness and otherwise affects his conclusions, in that they are based on language reported by a man who had no scientific interest in appearing as a faithful exponent of the popular speech. In all countries certain authors essay to produce characters speaking an idiom suitable to their humble position in life, but seldom with any degree of success. It is usually a manufactured jargon, conspicuous for its inconsistencies and impossible phonetic changes. Instance Brother Gardner of the Limekiln Club, who, while he has many good things to tell us, delivers himself in a language as far from the negro dialect as it is from English proper; and even Mr. Harris, who has come nearer in Uncle Remus to giving us the genuine article than anything that has yet appeared, allows the old man to fall into inaccuracies which any one who has been brought up in a southern state, will easily recognize as such.

Siede, not being acquainted at first hand with the dialect which Monnier puts into the mouths of his characters, is unable to correct him when he goes wrong; still, whoever has paid attention to the speech of illiterate Frenchmen will perceive that the examples cited have, in the main, the genuine ring and may be safely trusted as generally showing the syntactical difference between the popular and the academic language. The noun of course receives little attention, as it concerns more particularly lexicography. A few cases only of difference of gender are mentioned, traceable mostly to earlier usage. The few adjectives and adverbs capable of synthetic comparison receive an additional comparison with the people: *plus pire*; *a n'va pas pu mieux non pu* (elle ne va pas plus mieux non plus). The cardinal is used for the ordinal: *Encore un, c'est l'trois*, instead of *troisième*, a phenomenon referable to the people's preference for shorter forms.—The pronoun comes in for the most thorough treatment, over 30 pages being devoted to it alone. Several forms suffer mutilation. *Tu* becomes *t'* before vowels; *il* and *ils* become *i* before consonants: *i se rend*; *i vont leur train*; combined with a preceding *que*, we have *qui*: *Qu'est-ce qui* (=qu'il) *vous a fait*? The first *e* of *elle* and *elles* may change to *a*: *alle est morte*; (cf. Molière's *Festin*

de pierre, which, by the way, contains many of the peculiarities indicated by Siede as belonging to the popular speech of the present day); but before consonants all after *a* may be thrown off: j'sais pas d'quel état qu'a sont(qu'elles sont). *Leur* appears as *leux* and *lui* as *li*. Two datives, one the so-called ethical dative, are of frequent occurrence: Qu'est-ce qu'elle te *lui* a fait? (cf. L'Assommoir, p. 126: Dis donc, tu n'es pas embarrassée, tu *vous* lâches ça; and p. 442, Ah bein! merci, tu *vous* pompes joliment ça). A strange anomaly is the confounding of *je* and *nous*, to be explained undoubtedly by the common confusion of the corresponding forms of the verb: j'sommes trois Francés; et vous voulez-t'y point que je nous trouvions malheureux (que je me trouve, etc.); j'ons évu l'malheur d' perdre nos (mes) deux femmes. The disjunctive pronoun at times takes the place of the conjunctive: *moi* vas appeler maman. (cf. the negro patois of Louisiana: *mo* va pas prêté vous bâton pou cassé *mo* latête; and of Mauritius: *Li* fine vendé son coçon—il a vendu son cochon). It is a mistake however to say this is confined to children. *Leur* and *lui* appear as reflexives: C'est leurs femmes qui vont *leur* amuser (s'amuser); C'étaient pas lui non plus qui *lui* plaignion. On p. 26 Siede takes exception to the derivation of the abbreviated feminine demonstrative from *cette*, because it is "lautlich unmöglich, dass der Tonvokal zu Gunsten des unbetonten ausgefallen sein sollte. Vielmehr haben wir es hier mit einem der Volkssprache eigenthümlichen Demonstrativum *ste* zu thun." I see no reason for this; because I have observed that where *cette* is properly tonic, it is usually not abbreviated: *cette* affaire est arrivée (pr. sèt afèrètarivé); but dans c'te affaire, à c'te heure (pr. danstafèr, asteur), where *cette* is thrown back upon the preposition, forming one word with it and thereby losing its tonicity. Very peculiar is the use of the article with the demonstrative: c'est lui qu'a donné *les ceux* [ces oiseaux] qu'a madame.

The major part of the remainder of the thesis is given to the verb. Mention has already been made above of the confounding of certain forms with others: *j'avons* and the shortened *était*: *j'ons* for *j'ai*. Very abnormal is *équiont* for *était*: c'équiont d'la fine tarre qui n'y aviont point sa meillèure. The following show peculiarities that will explain themselves: depuis cinq heures

qu'ils se sont levés avec sa femme [i. e. lui et sa femme, referring back to *ils*] il n'avait rien pris; c'est moi qui s'trompe; c'est vous qui va être heureuse; j'm'attends à être aboyée; y faut qu'a save tout (il faut qu' elle sache tout); c'est le petit au menuisier qui m'a tombé; je t'en moque; je m'importe peu que tu tombes; elle a venue à Paris; dans tous les services que je suis été; il s'a ensauvé; vous ne vous a point gêné. The *passé défini* and the *imp. subj.* have almost wholly disappeared from the speech of the people, the *passé indéfini* and the *pres. subj.* having taken their places. Even amongst the educated it is considered pedantic to use the *imp. subj.* too frequently.

There are many other interesting features in Siede's dissertation, which must be passed by unnoticed. His first thesis on the back-cover: Es ist nicht wahrscheinlich, dass die franz. Volkssprache in syntaktischer Hinsicht einen bedeutenden Einfluss auf die Sprache der Gebildeten üben wird, is so much of a truism, that it needed no discussion. No language whose grammar has been once firmly fixed, is ever affected syntactically by the popular speech, as long as a moderately fair standard of culture is kept up by its people. The influence from this source will be only lexical.

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On the Formation of the Plural in s in English. By PROF. H. TALLICHET, University of Texas.

In Bulletin No. 2, of the University of Texas, Prof. Tallichet attacks the opinion enunciated by Latham, Marsh and others that "English was influenced by Norman-French, not only in its vocabulary, but also in its grammar." "He (Marsh) ascribes," says Prof. Tallichet, "to Norman influence: the periphrastic comparison of the adjective, the periphrastic genitive, the use of the preposition before the infinitive, and the formation of the plural of nouns in *s*. (*Lectures on the English Language*, p. 384)." The paper before us considers the last assertion only, promising an early investigation of the others. The author sets out with a truth which it would be well for all to bear in mind when tracing the influence which one language exerts upon the grammatical development of